

Ike Impressed By Peace Bid Of Red Press

SUN-TIMES Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON—President Eisenhower has welcomed the tone of Soviet official newspaper comment on his April 16 peace speech before American editors.

The President and his advisers, it was reliably stated, "are tremendously impressed," by the fact that for the first time in many years a speech by a U.S. President has been presented in its entirety to the peoples of the Soviet Union.

A member of the White House staff described that event as "the biggest breach we have made in the curtain."

"It looks promising," he concluded.

After his press secretary, James C. Hagerty, had consulted him, Mr. Eisenhower authorized Hagerty to issue a statement on the editorial published in Pravda, organ of the Soviet Communist Party.

MILDER TONE CITED

The same editorial was printed in Izvestia, Soviet government journal, and in other newspapers of the Soviet Union.

"Its milder tone," said Hagerty with presidential approval, "is a welcome change from the usual vituperation against the United States and the free world."

"It is also significant that world-wide interest in the President's peace speech caused the Soviet leaders to reprint it in full for the Russian people."

"Of course, the Pravda editorial cannot be considered a substitute for an official action by the Soviet leaders."

"Maybe this editorial is a first step toward something concrete. If so, the free world will continue to wait for the definite steps that must be made if the Soviet leaders are sincerely interested in a co-operative solution to world problems."

"If the Soviet leaders take such steps, they will find the United States and the other free nations, as always, ready to work unceasingly for peace."

The first report of the Soviet press comment reached the White House early Saturday morning.

It was soon followed by a report from the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Charles E. Bohlen, quoting the text of the Pravda statement.

WHAT SOVIET SAID

White House officials realized promptly that the editorial spread across the entire front pages of leading Soviet newspapers, was the first full, if unofficial, reply by



GIFT FROM REDS

Pfc. Howard L. Witt of Bartlesville, Okla., displays a wristwatch given him by Communists before he was taken to Panmunjom with the fifth group of exchanged sick and wounded prisoners. (AP Wirephoto via Radio from Tokyo)

Prime Minister Malenkov's government to President Eisenhower's speech.

The Soviet comment promised to welcome any U.S. step directed at friendly settlement of troublesome problems. It even "met with sympathy" the President's bid for a genuine, complete peace in Asia and in the rest of the world. It proclaimed that Soviet government's readiness for serious, businesslike discussion in direct talks with the United States, or within the United Nations framework.

The spectacular Soviet editorial contained one pointed criticism. It protested that the President's speech, while saying the United States would carry a just share in solving international difficulties, failed to reinforce that statement with any definite proposal.

DISCUSS STATEMENT

Their official newspaper have tossed the ball to President Eisenhower, he threw it right back at them Saturday.

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He has more unmistakably than ever invited them to spell out their suggestions for a world settlement.

The statement the President authorized Hagerty to distribute was discussed at an early-morning White House meeting. Present were Mr. Eisenhower, Allen Dulles, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency; C. D. Jackson, the President's special assistant for psychological warfare, and Hagerty.

Meanwhile, the State Department was thrown into more than usual confusion regarding the advance release of the text of a speech by Acting Sec. of State Walter Bedell Smith, former chief of the intelligence agency.

Smith's speech was handed to newsmen at 6 p.m. Friday (Chicago time). It was for publication Saturday at 2 p.m., when the acting secretary was to deliver it at the convocation exercises of the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H.

Friday at midnight, his State Department aids began telephoning Smith, informing him of the surprisingly temperate comment the foremost Soviet newspapers were publishing on President Eisenhower's speech.

An hour after midnight, the State Department put a temporary "stop" on the advance text of Smith's address.

In the meantime, the news prompted Smith to say he would revise his speech.

The news from Moscow had outlined some of Smith's prepared statements such as: "We don't yet know much about reactions (to the President's speech) in Communist countries. We know the Soviet press and radio carried brief summary."

Smith's prepared speech offered Russia a choice between America's "open hand or the closed glove." It sounded like an option between American good will or the mailed fist.

"The open hand," ran the speech, "is extended in a sincere gesture for peace. The fist is clenched in readiness because we are dealing with an extremely reactionary regime, still wedded to an archaic concept of power. It is up to them to choose which hand."

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